

## Message Text

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ACTION EB-07

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R 221600Z SEP 76  
FM AMEMBASSY VALLETTA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6990

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E.O. 11652: N/A  
TAGS: EAIR, MT  
SUBJ: INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT SECURITY

REF: STATE 212490

1. ON SEPTEMBER 16, EMBOFF MET WITH HENRY BORG CARDONA, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF CIVIL AVIATION, TO DISCUSS AIRPORT SECURITY, IN ACCORDANCE WITH REFTEL.
2. BORG CARDONA OUTLINED THE SECURITY PRECAUTIONS PRESENTLY IN FORCE AT MALTA'S LUQA AIRPORT. THESE INCLUDE THE USE OF METAL DETECTORS, BOTH WALK-THRU AND HAND, CARRY-ON BAGGAGE SEARCHES, AND THE STATIONING OF GUARDS AT THE TRANSIT LOUNGE AND OTHER KEY ENTRANCES AND EXITS. HE WAS NOT CERTAIN THAT THESE MEASURES ARE IN ACCORD WITH ICAO STANDARDS (I.E. ANNEX 17), BUT HE BELIEVES THEM TO BE ADEQUATE FOR MALTA.
3. THE MALTESE AIRPORT AUTHORITIES HAVE BEEN ASSISTED GREATLY BY BRITISH AIRWAYS IN ESTABLISHING SECURITY MEASURES AGAINST TERRORISM. THE METAL DETECTORS, AS WELL AS TRAINING SEMINARS FOR MALTESE PERSONNEL IN HOW TO USE THEM, WERE PROVIDED BY BRITISH AIRWAYS. THE SEMINARS INCLUDED INSTRUCTIONS ON HOW TO CONDUCT SEARCHES

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ON HAND BAGGAGE.

4. THE GOM RECENTLY SELECTED A SIX MAN TEAM TO UNDERGO TRAINING IN MODERN BOMB DISPOSAL TECHNIQUES. SOME OF THESE MEN ARE ALREADY IN THE UK ATTENDING COURSES RUN BY BRITISH SECURITY OFFICIALS. PART OF THE TRAINING FOR THE MALTESE PERSONNEL WILL CONSIST OF SERVING FOR AN EXTENDED PERIOD ALONG SIDE BRITISH SECURITY OFFICIALS AT HEATHROW AIRPORT IN LONDON.

5. MALTA HAS NOT RATIFIED THE 1970 HAUGE CONVENTION NOR THE 1971 MONTREAL CONVENTION. WHEN URGED THAT MALTA DO SO, BORG CARDONA INDICATED THAT THESE CONVENTIONS ARE NOT CONSIDERED IMPORTANT TO THE GOM.

6. COMMENT: THE EMBASSY IS AWARE OF INCIDENTS WHICH INDICATE THAT SECURITY AGAINST TERRORISM AT LUQA AIRPORT IS LAX. THERE ARE KNOWN CASES OF UNSCREENED PASSENGERS OBTAINING ACCESS TO THE TRANSIT LOUNGE AS WELL AS THE PARKING APRON AND THE CUSTOMS AREA. MALTESE OFFICIALS RECOGNIZE THIS SITUATION, BUT THEY ARGUE THAT BECAUSE OF THE PRO-ARAB (AND ESPECIALLY PRO-LIBYAN) STANCE OF THE MALTA LABOR GOVERNMENT, THE RISK OF A TERRORIST ACT IN MALTA IS VERY LOW. THE MALTESE ARE UNLIKELY TO BE CONVINCED OTHERWISE UNTIL SOMETHING HAPPENS TO PROVE THEM WRONG. END COMMENT  
SMITH

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